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SUBJECT: Sudan Update: Chad, East, Intervention,
Khartoum Constitution, Editor Arrested, Iran Commended

REF: Khartoum 895

Chad: SAF Claims it has Driven All Chadian Rebels Out

¶1. Sudanese Armed Forces claim they have driven all Chadian rebel forces out of West Darfur. There have been skirmishes along the Sudan-Chad border for two days, and MILOBS report hearing artillery firing on the morning of April 13. NGO workers confirm the reports, adding they believe the artillery is outgoing - i.e., from Sudan to Chad. SLA in-fighting continues between forces loyal to Abdel Wahid and Mini Minawi in and around the Jebel Mara area. The skirmishes have been small and indecisive, but AMIS MILOBS report that SLA MILOBS' loyalty to a particular faction often precludes them from participating in investigations due to fears for their personal security. UN reporting indicates that unidentified SLA forces have surrounded the SAF and government-held town of Rokiro in the Jebel Mara and are not allowing traffic in or out of the enclave. Rokiro has been fought over numerous times. (see reftel)

East: Rebels Attack Police Garrisons Near Kassala

¶2. Government officials in Kassala, East Sudan, report that on April 11, Eastern Front and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) rebels attacked two police garrisons 70 km north of Kassala, killing six army officers and four civilians. Four Eastern Front members were also killed in the attack. Government officials estimated that about 50 people were injured in the attacks. PolOff spoke with an Eastern Front representative in Khartoum, who reports that 14 were killed, all government soldiers, no Eastern Front rebels killed, and a few civilians injured. The source states that three areas were attacked to remind the government that the Beja are still a threat.

President Bashir: Beware Western Intervention in Darfur

¶3. According to the Sudan News Agency (SUNA), in an April 12 interview with Saudi Al-Ekhabariya TV, President Bashir denounced "suspicious Western attempts to fuel and prolong the conflict in Darfur in order to realize special agenda." Also on April 13, President Bashir is cited by SUNA as having addressed the fourth Congress of the Sudanese Youth National Union, stating that "international targeting of the country would continue until all Sudanese decided that no foreign soldier would

set foot on Sudanese soil whatever be the justifications." He added that "foreign intervention is but the old colonization cloaked in the new cloth of the suspicious organizations and arms dealers."

Khartoum Constitution Stuck in Negotiations

14. The Khartoum State Assembly has so far failed to ratify a state constitution due to differences among the National Congress Party, the SPLM, and the National Democratic Alliance. Each group has presented its draft of a proposed constitution. During discussion, some 17 differences were marked, with the assembly unable to reach an agreement. The assembly formed a constitution committee to discuss the differences and to come out with its recommendations; it was able to narrow the differences to six. The assembly then formed a technical committee of five members to work out the differences, although it also failed to reach to an agreement. The SPLA and NDA, who see the issue similarly, have suggested that the differences be raised to the Presidency. Key areas of disagreement include the definition of Khartoum as a national capital or a northern state under sharia law, and whether of not to include a human rights article, as mentioned in the Interim National Constitution.

One editor detained; another thrilled with his IV

15. According to the Khartoum Monitor, the English daily

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newspaper's Chairman and Editor-in-Chief Alfred Taban was arrested on April 13. Taban was charged with publishing false information and defamation over an editorial, which appeared earlier this month on the police treatment of Juba University students. He was later released on his own recognizance. Separately, the editor in chief of Sudan Vision (pro-govt), in a front page box, thanks the State Department and the Embassy for what he reports was a very fruitful IV program, from which he has just returned. He promises many articles on his visit.

Sudan National Assembly Speaker Commends Iran

16. According to Tehran IRNA, on April 13 in Istanbul, Sudanese National Assembly Speaker Ahmed Ibrahim al-Taher expressed delight over Iran's achievement in the area of peaceful nuclear technology. At a meeting with his Iranian counterpart Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel on the sidelines of the 4th Parliamentary Speakers' Conference of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), he said Khartoum was happy to hear that Tehran had successfully achieved uranium enrichment. He underlined the need for enhancement of mutual cooperation between the two states, and called for establishment of a parliamentary friendship group by the two parliaments.

STEINFELD